

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE  
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**Ambassador Barshefsky Cites Progress in Vietnam Negotiations**

United States Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky applauded progress made this week in the negotiation of a bilateral trade agreement with Vietnam. "We have significantly narrowed the number of remaining issues in this negotiation, which would set the stage for the normalization of trade relations between our two countries. Nonetheless, some key issues remain related to market access for some goods and services. We will continue to pursue an equitable and mutually beneficial agreement with Vietnam."

In 1995 President Clinton normalized diplomatic relations with Vietnam and directed agencies to begin the process of normalizing economic relations, including trade relations, in accordance with U.S. law. Discussion of a bilateral agreement began in 1996. Vietnam is one of six countries that does not receive "normal trade relations" treatment from the United States. Under U.S. law, in order to receive such treatment, a bilateral trade agreement must be concluded, and approved by Congress. The United States is seeking a comprehensive agreement which includes substantive provisions on market access for agricultural and industrial goods, services, intellectual property, and investment, which would then move Vietnam toward adoption of WTO and other international norms in the area of trade.